

# The Japanese Organic Agriculture Promotion Law and the Experience of Organic Rice Farmers in Akita Prefecture : 平成24年度資源環境経済学講座 修士論文要旨

著者	U-Nichols Asis Manalo
雑誌名	農業経済研究報告
号	44
ページ	130
URL	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10097/56389">http://hdl.handle.net/10097/56389</a>

# The Japanese Organic Agriculture Promotion Law and the Experience of Organic Rice Farmers in Akita Prefecture

有機農業振興法と秋田県有機米生産者の経験

U-Nichols Asis Manalo (農業経営経済学分野)

**【Objective】** The organic agriculture sector is rapidly growing globally. Government institutions are getting more involved in the sector as it recognized its importance to food security and sustainable agricultural development. Policies and regulations on the development and promotion of the sector are enacted in recent years, just like in the case of the Governments of Japan and the Philippines. This paper studies the Japanese Organic Agriculture Promotion Law by looking into the policy measures implemented under the five-year plan and make observation based on the experiences of organic rice farmers in Akita Prefecture. The goals of the study are: to determine whether the implementation of the organic promotion law had influenced the production and marketing practices of the organic rice farmers; to determine the farmers reasons to go into organic farming; and to offer insights to the Ministry of Agriculture in the Philippines in the implementation of its own organic agriculture promotion law.

**【Method】** Secondary information on the implementation status of the five-year basic principles as well as production and marketing data are sourced from MAFF reports, survey results, news articles and research publications. A pre-designed questionnaire was utilized in the farmer survey in Akita Prefecture. Out of the 50 questionnaires distributed only 16 farmers have responded. Also, a visit to the Philippines was made in June 2012 and interviews with concerned agencies of the Philippine Department of Agriculture, representatives of local government and non-government organization, and group of organic rice farmers were conducted.

**【Results】** From 2006 to 2010, no significant increase was observed in the production output of organic products as well as in the number of farmers shifting to or getting into organic farming much less becoming certified. The identified reasons behind these are the following: the strict requirement of product certification (JAS system), the lack of proven production techniques and technologies to address issues such as weed control and pest and disease, the lack of consumer awareness and appreciation about the nature of organic agriculture and organic products, the direct-selling type of marketing practice by most farmers (a *Tekei*-type system), and the apparent level of biasness of government policies which put more emphasis to other sustainable and environment friendly farming methods like “eco-farming”. The results of farmer survey in Akita Prefecture showed that 69% of the farmers preferred combinations of conventional, special (*tokubetsusuibaimai*) and organic (*yuki nogyo*) farming methods. These provide them a certain level of protection in the event of poor harvest and low market demand. Eighty-eight percent of the farmers’ plant rice and 50% of them are certified organic rice farmers. Compliance to the JAS law and consumer’s preferences are the factors that influenced the organic farmers to certify their products. In terms of marketing, direct-selling to consumers and to cooperatives like Japan Agricultural Cooperatives (JA) are the most preferred approach by the farmers for both rice and other crops. The favored market destinations for rice are supermarkets and retails shops while for other crops, the agricultural trade fairs. And it’s not the high price but the opportunity to produce better-tasting and safe food through an environment-friendly way are the major factors offered by farmers about why they practiced organic farming.

**【Conclusion】** The implementation of the Japanese organic agriculture promotion law through the policy measures provided in the five-year plan failed to stimulate the growth of the organic agriculture sector. A comprehensive evaluation and assessment of the promotional plans employed by the local governments should be conducted to improve the administration of activities. More focused policy measures on organic farming should be made if it cannot be separated within the broader agenda of environmental conservation. Finally, the law should be amended to include other forms of product certification systems such as the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS).